

KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL

Human Resources Committee – 7th April 2005

A REVIEW OF STAFF TURNOVER

Report by Head of Human Resources

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide members with comparisons with other organisations for them to assess whether there is a turnover problem within Kennet or whether its turnover is normal for such an organisation.

2. Staffing, Financial and Legal issues

- 2.1 There are no direct staffing, financial or legal implications as a result of this report.

3. Background

- 3.1 For a number of years we have reported on the staff turnover and on the recruitment and retention initiatives introduced by the Council to reduce turnover. There has been some slow but steady reduction. However, at the last meeting of the HR Committee, members asked for a report on where this Council stood in relation to other Councils to enable the Committee to assess whether we had a problem within Kennet or not.
- 3.2 In June last year the HR Committee received a report on the various recruitment and retention initiatives put in place by the Council over the last 3-4 years. The conclusions of that report were that these had been successful in having an impact on recruitment and retention.
- 3.3 The Council had in the main, no major difficulty in recruiting, even to nationally perceived to be hard to fill posts (planning, legal and environmental health principally). That said, over the last few years it has had a deliberate policy of developing such staff in-house so as to have staff ready to step up should the need arise. This strategy has been most successful.

4. Turnover rates

- 4.1 In preparing for this report, we talked to our colleagues within Wiltshire and also within the Daventry Group. We also looked at the nationally

reported figures.

- 4.2 The current turnover for all Kennet District Council staff, including leisure, is 17.23%, but excluding leisure staff it is 14.62%
- 4.3 Nationally, Councils were required to report on turnover until 2003, when this performance indicator was dropped as it was difficult to compare across authorities because of local variations, make-up of Councils etc. At the time our turnover was at 18.2% (2002/03), compared with a national average of 10.94% (2001/02 – last reported national figures). We continued to report our turnover figures to the HR Committee.
- 4.4 As a result of enquiries to the Daventry Group. to date we received 2 responses, who advised us as follows:

| | Council A | Council B |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Turnover – all staff | 8.6% | 8% |
| Turnover leisure only | 18.3% | n/a |

Both have lower turnovers than us, but there are clear indications that the turnover within leisure is higher than for all staff.

- 4.5 The picture from within the other Wiltshire Districts was different however with authorities reporting turnovers ranging from 17.7% to 20.7% for all staff. The one authority that still has leisure centres reported a turnover within leisure of 18.35%. All these figures are for the year 2003/04 or for the year 2004 and therefore comparable with our current statistics.

5. **Exit interviews**

- 5.1 All staff who leave Kennet District Council are encouraged to have an exit interview (conducted by staff from within the HR team) or to complete an exit review form. The outcome of these reviews is reported annually to the Management Team of the Council. This is optional and it not taken up by all staff.
- 5.2 The last report showed the official reasons for leaving given by 77.5% of staff was for a career development or promotion. Of the rest 10% left for changes in their domestic arrangements (eg family commitments, partner relocating their job), 4% returned to full time education, and 6.25% left because of job dissatisfaction.
- 5.3 There are many positive comments made about Kennet District Council as an employer and leavers commented on the location of the offices, the friendly atmosphere and the training opportunities that were available to all

staff. Additionally staff commented favourably on having a varied and interesting workload, being given interesting projects to work on and working with people.

- 5.4 There were negative comments too, but these varied from post to post, but included pressure of work, lack of pressure at work, red tape, the public and lack of communication. Many of these were contradictory and would be unique to a particular section, and even reflective of the individual.
- 5.5 Other questions revolved around relationships with colleagues and managers and the vast majority of people responded that they had very positive relationships with everyone. The majority of staff were also satisfied with their level of pay and their benefits.
- 5.6 Along with the annual report to Management Team a number of actions are drawn up each year in relation to the comments coming from the exit interviews. The most significant one has been the introduction of opportunities for greater work life balance, including flexible work options, buying and selling of leave and sabbaticals.

6. **Criteria for Good Employers**

- 6.1 Every year the Sunday Times lists those companies that are perceived to be the best employers. Those organisations applying for this accolade are measured on the following categories:• **Leadership** - how employees feel about the head of the company and senior managers
- **Wellbeing** - how staff feel about stress, pressure and the balance between their work and home duties
- **My manager** - people's feelings towards their immediate boss and their day to day managers
- **My team** - people's feelings about their immediate colleagues
- **Fair deal** – how happy employees are with their pay and benefits
- **Giving something back** – how much companies are thought by their staff to put back into society in general and the local community in particular.
- **My company** - feelings about the company people work for as opposed to the people they work with
- **Personal growth** – to what extent people feel they are stretched and challenged by their job.

This is aimed primarily at private sector organisations, but it is felt that Kennet could hold its head high if measured against these criteria.

One of the actions planned by the HR team for this year is to carry out a staff survey and it is planned to use these criteria to assess the feelings of the staff in relation to the Council as its employer.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 Whilst we do not have a huge body of evidence, the indications are that we are not alone in experiencing high turnover within leisure staff and that our turnover of 17.23% is not exceptional.
- 7.2 The majority of staff leaving the Council leave for good reasons. We are a small authority who has a deliberate policy of developing staff. Unfortunately we are not always able to offer promotional opportunities to all of those staff and inevitably those who wish to gain promotion sometimes have to leave the Council.
- 7.3 It is possible that issuing a questionnaire sometime after staff have left might result in a different response and enable us to take further action to improve our retention rates and the HR team will review this with a view to obtaining better information on reasons for leaving.
- 7.4 Locally our turnover of staff is good, but nationally it could certainly be better. A target of reducing the turnover down to 14% has been set for this year and next year.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 The committee are asked to approve the following
 - a) to note the content of this report
 - b) to encourage the development of additional systems to improve our understanding of why staff leave the Council.

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Head of Human Resources

Background papers

None